



Engrossed throng watches *pizzaiuolo* (baker) Alfred Nunziato flip dough at Frank Mastro's model pizzeria in New York. Mastro is biggest dealer in pizza equipment in United States

One pizza every second rolls off the assembly line at Nino Food Products in Newark, New Jersey. The pizzas are refrigerated or frozen and shipped by air for sale in food markets



# FOR THE

An old Italian treat is sweeping

**P**RESIDENT EISENHOWER caused an international incident a couple of months ago. He said he had eaten better pizza in the Little Italy section of New York than he had ever sampled in Naples, Italy.

To the proud pizza makers of Naples, where the succulent pie originated 200 years ago, Eisenhower's remarks were heresy. You might as well say that you can find better baked beans in San Francisco than in Boston, or better shrimps créole in Chicago than in New Orleans.

But before Eisenhower's statement could become the subject of a diplomatic protest, Admiral Robert B. Carney, commander in chief of the North Atlantic Treaty Southern European Forces, came to the defense of the Neapolitan pizza makers. In a way, he had to; Carney's headquarters are in Naples, and the success of his mission depends in part on maintaining friendly relations with the inhabitants of the city.

Whatever his motives, Carney promptly issued this statement: "Despite the fact that General Eisenhower has been my commanding officer, despite the fact that he is my good friend, I am obliged to intervene on behalf of the pizza sellers of Naples. This is my considered opinion, greatly encouraged by the opinion of my wife, who considers the pizza of Naples to be nothing less than an artistic creation." The chef of Naples' Excelsior Hotel rewarded Carney with an 80-pizza dinner for the commander, Mrs. Carney and American, British, French, Turkish and Italian officers on Carney's NATO staff.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the whole incident was that the dispute was over pizza—before World War II little known in the United States outside Italian circles. It pointed up the fact that pizza has now become a favorite of all races and classes in this country. There are at least 15,000 pizzerias in the United States which bake and sell pizza on the premises, plus 100,000 or more stores and markets which distribute ready-made refrigerated or frozen pizza. And the numbers are growing all the time.

Just what is pizza?

In its classical Neapolitan form, pizza is a circular, thin layer of bread dough, usually a foot in diameter, laden with tomato paste, mozzarella cheese, olive oil, garlic, pepper and *orégano*. A baker, called a *pizzaiuolo*, flattens the dough by tossing it into the air, then deftly adds the other ingredients and shoves the pizza into the oven. The classicist still bakes the pie on bricks, but most modern *pizzaiuolos* use metal ovens.

Although the Neapolitan-type pizza is sold in 90 per cent of American pizzerias, there is also a Sicilian pizza, slightly thicker, more breadlike and baked in a pan. Then there are variations of both types—made with mushrooms, anchovies, sausages, eggs or onions. A pizzeria also will make a half-and-half pie; for example, one section with mushrooms and the other with sausages.

There is even a pizza nicknamed by its devotees the "kitchen sink" but more properly known as *pizza alla quattro stagioni* (the four seasons); it comprises all the ingredients already mentioned, plus any others which may be handy. Some of these "kitchen sinks" have an inch of filling atop the quarter inch of dough, are 16 inches in diameter, are big enough to serve four persons and cost as much as \$7.

The real origin of pizza has been lost through the ages, according to sixty-six-year-old Milona Luigino, self-styled "Exploiter of Pizza in These United States" and proprietor of Luigino Restaurant and Pizzeria at 147 West Forty-eighth Street

Collier's for March 7, 1953



# LOVE OF PIZZA

By HERBERT MITGANG

the nation. It's a meal-in-a-dish so succulent, composers have written songs about it

in mid-Manhattan, which caters to Broadway celebrities like Jimmy Durante, Fred Allen, George Jessel and Paul Whiteman.

"The first mention of pizza was in the seventeenth century in a cookbook written by Monzu Testa, a *pizzaiuolo* who became the royal cook," Luigino says. "King Ferdinand of Bourbon noticed him patting a piece of dough into round pies, ate one, and ordered the baker to the royal palace. There an oven was installed and pizzas were made fit for a king and his court."

Pizza crossed the Atlantic with Italian immigrants in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Probably the first pizzeria in America was established at 53½ Spring Street, New York City, about 1895. A few years later, Gennaro Lombardi, then a thirteen-year-old boy, became an apprentice *pizzaiuolo* there. He developed a hand for making pizza and in 1905, for \$200, bought the pizzeria. Now known as Lombardi's, it is still run by Gennaro, assisted by his sons, John and George.

## High Praise from Enrico Caruso

Both Lombardi and Luigino recall visits by a man who was probably the all-time greatest pizza eater in this country, Enrico Caruso. One evening after the opera, the great Neapolitan tenor strode into Lombardi's with his friends and ordered pizzas all around. When Lombardi laid a fresh tablecloth, Caruso yanked it off. "I come here to eat pizza, not tablecloths!" he exclaimed. This story is matched uptown by Luigino, who says Caruso, after a heavy session at the table, told him, "Luigino, I owe my voice to your pizza!"

In the intervening years, pizza has spread from the Italian section of New York to all 48 states. In New England, for example, you can buy pizza in supermarkets in almost every city and large town. Fresh pizza is sold by the slice at sporting events in Hartford, Connecticut. When winter comes to Revere Beach, Boston's Coney Island, one small light burns defiantly on the darkened boulevard through the cold months—at a year-around pizzeria. In Boston itself, a Syrian-American runs a pizzeria highly touted by Harvard men; the proprietor's nineteen-year-old son left recently for Florida to introduce winter vacationists to the closely guarded family recipe.

In the Southern states, ready-made pizzas usually can be found in the chain markets and in grocery stores, but it's sometimes difficult to locate the fresh and hot variety. Only two or three restaurants in Atlanta specialize in Italian food, and one recently removed pizza from the menu because the management was losing money on Georgia Tech students who ordered a single pizza for a whole group and then nursed it and a couple of bottles of beer for hours.

The biggest pizza establishments in the South are in ports like Mobile and Norfolk. Sailors get around the world and many of them, like crews on ships from the U.S. Sixth Fleet stationed at Naples, acquire a liking for Italian food in its native setting. Norfolk alone has at least two dozen pizzerias. New Orleans also has taken pizza to its tables. So has Miami Beach.

As for the Midwest, there are so many pizzerias

At Flamingo Lounge in Gary, Ind., Bruno Jtin lovingly applies finishing touches to pizza before baking it. Dough, tomato paste, oil and cheese are the dish's basic ingredients

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JOHN MENDICINO



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## How do you prepare the perfect pizza? The experts disagree.

in Chicago that competition has forced prices down from \$1.25 to \$1 for a 12-inch pizza. One Chicago pizzeria has a sign reading, "Pitza." "I know it's spelled wrong," says the proprietor, "but it brings results. People come in to tell me the printer made a mistake, or wander in wondering what this new dish is. I sell them a pizza once they get past the door."

The Flamingo Cocktail Lounge in Gary, Indiana, dresses its pizza maker in a chef's hat and has him perform in a front window. While spectators gather outside the window, the baker tosses dough into the air, spreading it out thinner each time it flies up. Some Midwestern bars give pizza slices away free as appetizers because it helps to sell more beer.

Southwestern palates appreciate pizza because of its vague resemblance to a Mexican enchilada. Pizza passed its biggest popularity test in Texas at the State Fair there last year. The first pizza concession in the history of the annual fair was opened by Louis (Frenchie) Roussel. He kept four persons busy serving nothing but pizza, and his salesmen hawked more pies all over the exhibition grounds, from the Cotton Bowl to Sally Rand's revue. Pizza held its own against such standbys as popcorn, fried chicken, tamales, French fries and hot dogs.

Along the Pacific Coast, Los Angeles has some 75 pizzerias, Hollywood about a dozen, and San Diego, with its naval base, a booming 30 to 40. But none produces a pizza with the authority of the firmly entrenched Italian citizenry in San Francisco's North Beach area. There are numerous lavishly appointed and well-advertised pizzerias in North Beach. However, they cater mostly to tourists. The connoisseurs and the Italians themselves mostly patronize small, family-type pizzerias. A typical one is the Sorrento Pizzeria and Restaurant at 314 Columbus Avenue. It is presided over by Camille Criscuolo, who hails from Sorrento, Italy. Her husband, Jerry, is the showmanlike chef, and his batter recipe is a family secret.

### Pizza becomes "Big Business"

There can be no question that pizza is now a big industry in the United States. The nation's 15,000 pizzerias represent an average investment in equipment and furnishings of \$12,000 each, or a total outlay of \$180,000,000. The frozen and refrigerated pizza investment by about 1,000 manufacturers and distributors probably comes to another \$25,000,000.

Nobody can guess with any accuracy how many pizzas are consumed annually because this is a highly individualistic business. There is no pizza association and probably never will be, although there are fierce loyalties and even three popular songs composed in praise of pizza: Pass a Piece of Pizza, Please; Pizza and Beer; and Angelina, the latter a song about a young woman who works in a pizzeria. As with every industry, however, close scrutiny discloses some interesting personalities behind the pizza's sudden upsurge in popularity.

One of the biggest manufacturers of refrigerated and frozen pizza is Francis X. (Nino) Ferrari, head of Nino Food Products, Inc., of Newark, New Jersey. And he is now doing two things

which, to put it mildly, would startle any old-time pizzaiuolo: producing pizza on an assembly line, and distributing it by commercial airlines.

Ferrari began to fly 50,000 pizzas a week to Ohio, Illinois and Michigan this winter. The pizza flows off his assembly line at 8:00 A.M., is placed next to the air-conditioning unit in the rear of a four-engine plane by 9:30 A.M. at nearby Newark airport, arrives in Detroit three hours later and can be bought by a Detroit housewife in her local market in plenty of time for dinner. These pizzas are refrigerated, not frozen, and retail for 39 cents each; four cents of the price represents the cost of air-lifting each pizza to Detroit.

### Spaghetti for Marines on Iwo

"I got into the pizza business because my brother Fred was a Marine sergeant on Iwo Jima in the Pacific during World War II," Nino Ferrari explains, somewhat incongruously. "One day I got a letter from him, after he had been wounded and won the Silver Star, saying that he could take anything if he only could have some of my mother's spaghetti and sauce. I fiddled around the kitchen experimenting with preparations that would keep during the long ride across the Pacific. I finally found a satisfactory combination and sent it off to Iwo. Pretty soon Fred's whole company was eating spaghetti and our sauce—cooking it in their helmets."

"After the war, Fred said that we ought to go into business because his buddies all over the country loved Italian food. With the help of my mother, we mixed a ready-made pizza sauce at home, and were in business. Mama Angelina came from Naples originally and Fiorello La Guardia, when a congressman, used to come to our house to eat her cooking."

Fifteen women work on Ferrari's 40-

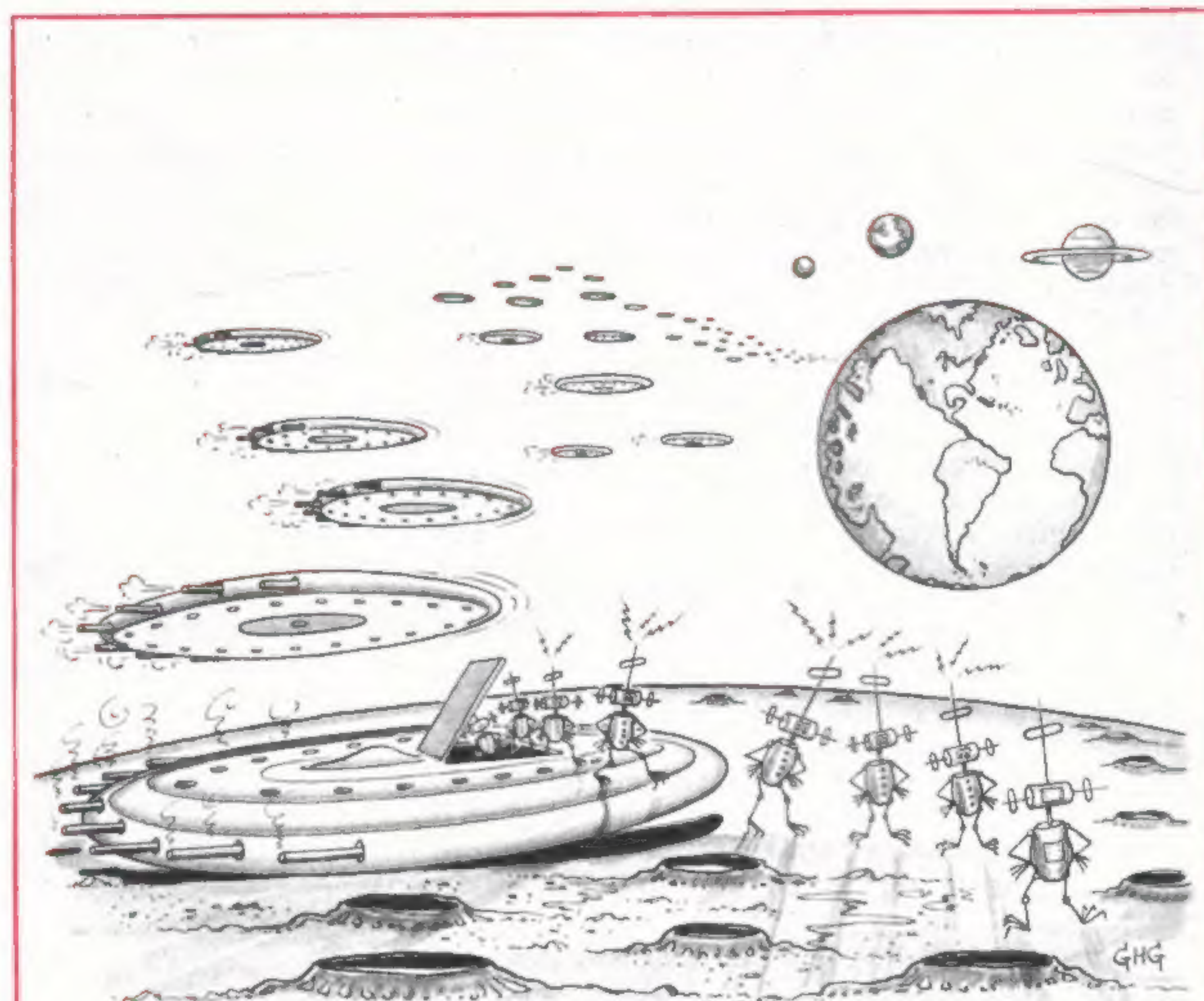
foot assembly line, off which a pizza rolls every second. One worker prepares the dough shell, then two others place thin slices of mozzarella cheese on the shell and, as it rides the line, it gets a glob of Ferrari's own tomato sauce and a shake of pepper and oregano from another worker. Eight women wrap completed pies in cellophane and three others box them for air shipment. Ferrari's pizza is a real international pie: plum tomatoes from California, olive oil from Castelvetro in Sicily, and pure black pepper from the Pacific area.

The Tasty Pizza Baking Corporation of Long Island City, New York, a competitor, also uses an assembly line and turns out 15,000 pizzas daily compared with Ferrari's 15,000 to 20,000. Both Nino and Tasty simply ask the housewife to heat the pizzas for five minutes or so, perhaps add some sausage and serve hot.

Another man who has played a major role in popularizing pizza is Frank Mastro, the largest dealer in pizza equipment in the United States. Most people who want to open a pizzeria go or write to Mastro's store on Manhattan's Bowery. He sells gas-fired ovens, work tables, dough retarders, serving trays, peels (long-handled baking trays), cardboard pizza boxes for home deliveries and even the pizza symbol—a plaster statue of an Italian chef holding a pizza.

### Ovens Bake 60 Pies an Hour

"The pizza business has come up fast in the last ten years," Mastro says. "Before then, pizzerias used old-fashioned ovens. I got together with an oven company and designed a special pizza oven that turns out 60 pies an hour—one a minute. That oven has helped a lot of people go into business. One place opens and right away there's a second one in the same block. You need less



"We sure had them guessing. At first they said we were flying saucers, and then they called us weather balloons, and finally ended up with such conjectures as hallucinations, pipe dreams, bats in your belfry, nuts, and one too many"

COLLIER'S

GEORGE  
HAMILTON  
GREEN



## But here are two tried-and-true recipes

than \$2,000 to buy your equipment (oven, work table, refrigerator, the necessary tools and trays) and the profit can be high. Sell five hundred pizzas a week—not too difficult in the right neighborhood—at a dollar apiece, and you can see why there's a new pizzeria coming up all the time."

Mastro's store has the only pizza map of the United States. Pins indicate every town in which he has sold one of his ovens. His records list such random purchasers as the Beachwater Café, Biloxi, Mississippi; the Majestic Steak House, Kansas City, Missouri; and in Jacksonville, North Carolina, the Brooklyn Spaghetti House.

Luigino and Lombardi, who make

### Pizza Ingredients

**Pizza dough**  
Olive oil, 2 tablespoons  
Anchovy filets, ¼ lb.  
Tomatoes, 1 medium can  
Mozzarella cheese, sliced thin, ¾ lb.  
Salt, ¼ teaspoon  
Pepper, freshly ground, ½ teaspoon  
Orégano, ½ teaspoon

Pull dough with your hands until it is about ½ inch thick and large enough to cover a round pie plate about 18 inches across (or two 12-inch plates). Sprinkle with oil until dough is well covered. Place anchovies, tomatoes and mozzarella cheese all over dough, add salt, pepper, orégano and a little



COLLIER'S

"It's for a party. Nobody's getting married this month"

JERRY MARCUS

their pizzas on solid brick ovens sunk into the floor, frown on progress in the shape of Mastro's metal pizza ovens, and both of them would rather not talk about Nino's refrigerated pizzas. Moreover, they do not agree on the best pizza recipe.

Nevertheless, for those who are interested in baking their own pizza, we can offer two recipes. The first is a real Italian (Italian, not Italian-American) recipe, and the second is a short-cut American recipe.

The Italian recipe comes from *Talismano della Felicità*, by Ada Boni, the cookbook given brides in Italy. (An English-language edition, *Talisman Italian Cook Book*, translated by Matilda La Rosa, is published by Crown.) Here is how to make pizza the Italian way for four people:

### Pizza Dough

Flour, sifted, 4½ cups  
Leaf lard, 2 tablespoons  
Salt, ¼ teaspoon  
Pepper, ¼ teaspoon  
Yeast, 1¼ envelopes  
Water, warm, 1½ cups

Place flour on pastry board, add lard, salt, pepper, yeast and warm water and work well until smooth. Place in large pan, cover and let rise in warm place two hours, or until double in bulk. Place on floured board and pound lightly to deflate it. Divide into two pieces and stretch each piece on bottom of greased 12-inch pie plate.

Collier's for March 7, 1953

more oil and place in hot oven (400 degrees F.) for about twenty minutes.

For those cooks scared off by the elaborate recipe, there is a simple formula for a midget-size pizza. It eliminates making the dough and is introducing pizza for the first time into many homes. Here it is:

### Italian Pizza, New York Style

Pull apart 3 English muffins, toast light and place in pie pan. Drain ¾ cup tomatoes to remove juice, and break up lightly with fork; spread on muffin halves; top with thin slices of Italian mozzarella or American cheese. Sprinkle with salt, a little cayenne, and grated Parmesan-type cheese. (Pinch of orégano optional.) Pour one teaspoon salad oil over each. Bake in hot oven (400 degrees F.) 15 minutes.

Homemade or mass-produced, baked in brick ovens or in metal ovens, pizzas clearly are here to stay.

"There are probably more pizzerias now in New York than in Naples and surely more in the United States than in Italy," says Paul Grimes, of Burlington, Vermont, sales manager for the company which manufactures Mastro's ovens.

"Frank Mastro has sold pizza ovens in every state, and as far north as Montreal and Winnipeg and as far south as Puerto Rico. He even received an inquiry recently from Naples. Imagine selling an American pizza oven to a Neapolitan pizzeria!"

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